

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JIDDA 08262 261033Z
ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6670

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 8262

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, ENRG, SA
SUBJECT: MUZZLING OF MINPET YAMANI?

1. DEPARTMENT MAY HAVE NOTED THAT YAMANI, WHO HAS BEEN MAKING STATEMENTS CONNECTING SAUDI ACTION IN OPEC WITH SPECIFIC POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, HAS FALLEN SILENT. HIS COMMENTS, AS YOU KNOW, WERE PICKED UP BY REPORTERS IN THE UNITED STATES AND BROUGHT TO ATTENTION OF ELECTED OFFICIALS WHO CONSEQUENTLY FOUND IT NECESSARY TO ADDRESS THEM. THE FOLLOWING MAY SHED SOME LIGHT ON YAMANI'S SUDDEN DISPLAY OF DISCRETION:

2. YAMANI IS A TECHNICIAN WHO PLAYS MINOR ROLE IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESS HERE, AS I HAVE INFORMED DEPT. PREVIOUSLY. HE FINDS PUBLICITY HEADY STUFF LIKE MOST EGOCENTRICS AND HAS ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS ALSO FELT COMPELLTED TO RELATE OIL DEVELOPMENTS TO OTHER ASPECTS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

3. ON DECEMBER 22 I REMARKED TO HIGH-LEVEL FOREIGN OFFICE FRIEND THAT IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE FROM OUR VIEWPOINT IF ALL STATEMENTS CONNECTING OIL TO UNITED STATES ATTITUDES COULD BE VETTED BY THE ROYAL SECRETARIAT AND THE FONOFF. MY FRIEND SEEMED ATTENTIVE BUT SAID NOTHING. I HAD
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 JIDDA 08262 261033Z

REASON TO BELIEVE FOREIGN OFFICE WOULD NOT OBJECT TO SUCH COMMENT.

4. SEVERAL HOURS LATER I ENCOUNTERED SAME FONOFF OFFICIAL LEAVING AUDIENCE CHAMBER IN PALACE AS I WAS ENTERING. THERE WAS NO TIME FOR CONVERSATION THEN, BUT AT DINNER

LATER HE INFORMED ME THAT HE HAD TAKEN UP WITH PRINCE
FAHD, THEN VICEROY, PROBLEM OF UNCOORDINATED STATEMENTS.
VICEROY HAD ALMOST IMMEDIATELY ISSUED ANNOUNCEMENT TO
EFFECT SAUDI ACTION ON OIL NOT RPT NOT RELATED TO ANY
SPECIFIC POLITICAL (READ: MID-EAST) OR ECONOMIC
(READ: NORTH-SOUTH) PROBLEM AND HAD BEEN TAKEN ON
BASIS OF SAUDI JUDGEMENT ALONE. TEXT BY SEPTTEL.
PORTER

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NNN

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